

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

White Conveyor Inc

New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program

Lean Manufacturing Cuts Costs, Speeds Productivity for White Conveyors, Inc.

Client Profile:

White Conveyors, Inc., a manufacturer of conveyor systems used primarily in the dry cleaning, laundry, hotel and casino, correctional and retail industries, was established in 1984 as a subsidiary of White Machine Company. White Conveyors found success quickly, leading to expansion and product line diversification. The retirement of two company principals led to the 1986 sale of the business to the Speckhart family. Today, the 95-employee company is recognized as the worldwide leader in automated garment sorting, storage and retrieval systems. Many of its products are adapted for use in other industries and markets.

Situation:

White Conveyor wanted to cut expenses and reduce manufacturing cycle time. As part of White Conveyors ongoing commitment to improvement, the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NJMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, was contacted for assistance with the project.

Solution:

Initially, a Quick View Assessment was performed, followed by a Lean Opportunity Assessment, which led to a Lean Transformation project that was commenced with assistance from NJMEP, in cooperation with the Center for Manufacturing Systems at New Jersey Institute of Technology. The Lean Transformation project included a three-day Value Stream Mapping (VSM) session, attendance by several White Conveyors' personnel at public Principles of Lean classes, and multiple 5S workshops.

"Our Lean Manufacturing project was a resounding success," assessed Director of Quality Scarpa. "The result was a fast realization of benefits with virtually no capital expense," he continued. Another significant, quantifiable improvement, noted by Plant Manager John Moore, was the reduction of overtime incurred during frequent periods of high demand. Looking ahead, Moore explains, "With broader implementation, we expect to completely eliminate the need for overtime expense." Moore's evaluation of his experience working with NJMEP was equally positive. White Conveyor's William Soto, Fabrication Department Foreman, observed vast improvements in both processes and people. "With our old MRP batch system, I was always juggling 'hot' jobs," Soto explained. "After putting in place the Lean Manufacturing ideas," he continued, "the orders flow through smoothly, and my employees are more productive and have better morale." Scarpa sees promising future opportunities in conjunction with NJMEP, which could include Lean consulting to improve specific areas. "As part of our continuing improvement efforts," he notes, "we look forward to working with the professionals at NJMEP in the future."

Results:

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- * Reduced overtime during periods of high time.
- * Improved processes.
- * Improved productivity and employee morale.
- * Improved work flow.

Testimonial:

"I've been working in the industry for over 25 years and have seen many ideas come and go. The hands-on approach of NJMEP, and more importantly, the real results we have achieved have changed me forever."

John Moore, Plant Manager